

directing the male element into the female element so that the male and female elements are telescopingly engaged and a joint surface on the female element surrounds a joint surface on the male element;

with the male and female elements telescopingly engaged, placing a ring of the meltable material around one of the male and female elements at a first location ;

heating the male and female elements at the joint to a temperature at which the meltable material melts;

sliding the ring of meltable material guidingly directly against the one of the male and female elements from the first location to a second location;

with the ring of meltable material at the second location and the male and female elements at the joint at a temperature at which the meltable material melts, causing the meltable material to flow between the male and female joint surfaces; and

cooling the male and female elements at the joint to solidify the meltable material between the male and female joint surfaces.

11. (amended) A method of forming a meltable material at a joint between telescopingly engaged male and female elements, the female element having a free edge, said method comprising the steps of:

directing the male element into the female element so that the male and female elements are telescopingly engaged and a joint surface on the female element surrounds a joint surface on the male element;

with the male and female elements telescopingly engaged, placing a ring of the meltable material around the male element at a first location spaced from the free edge of the female element,

sliding the meltable material guidingly directly against the male element from the first location closer to the free edge of the female element to a second location at which the ring of the meltable material is not fully within the female element;

heating the male and female elements at the joint to a temperature at which the meltable material melts;

causing the melted meltable material to flow between the male and female elements; and

cooling the male and female elements at the joint to solidify the meltable material between the male and female joint surfaces.

16. A method of making a connection between male and female elements, said method comprising the steps of:

directing the male element into the female element so that the male and female elements are telescopingly engaged and a joint surface on the female element surrounds a joint surface on the male element;

providing a ring of meltable material;

with the male and female elements telescopingly engaged, directing one of the male and female elements through the ring of meltable material to a first location on the one of the male and female elements;

after directing the one of the male and female elements through the ring of meltable material, directing the male element into the female element so that the female joint surface surrounds the male joint surface;

with the male element in the female element, sliding the ring of the meltable material guidingly directly against the one of the male and female elements to a second location;

heating the male and female joint surfaces to a temperature at which the meltable material melts;

causing the melted meltable material to flow between the male and female joint surfaces; and

cooling the male and female joint surfaces to solidify the meltable material between the male and female joint surfaces.

Please add new claim 21 as follows:

21. The method of making a connection between male and female elements according to claim 11 wherein in the second position, the ring of meltable material directly abuts to the free edge of the female element.

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 are currently pending in the application. Claims 1-3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14 and 16-18 stand rejected under 35 USC §102 as allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,968,982 (Belicic). Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 16-18 stand rejected under 35 USC